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A
S E R M O N

On Occasion of the
Earthquake at *LISBON*,
IN THE
Kingdom of *PORTUGAL*,
AND THE
Present Situation of Affairs in GREAT
BRITAIN.

Preach'd in the
Parish Church of MILTON next *Gravesend*,
The Sixth of *February*, 1756.

The Day appointed by His MAJESTY for a
PUBLICK and GENERAL FAST.

By *JAMES HOW*, M. A.
Rector of *Milton* in KENT,
And *St. Margaret's Lothbury* in LONDON.

DEDICATED TO
The Worshipful RICHARD READ, Esq,
MAYOR of *Gravesend* and *Milton*.

L O N D O N :
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St. LUKE XIII, Ver. 2, 3.

And Jesus answering, said unto them, suppose ye that these Galileans were Sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such Things ?

I tell you, nay ; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

WHEN Jesus was at a certain time instructing his Disciples, and the People, who were gathered in great Crouds about him, some, who were then present, took occasion to mention to him the miserable Fate of the *Galileans*, whose Blood *Pilate* had mingled with their Sacrifices.—The Story of those unhappy Persons is thus told,—They were the enthusiastic Followers of one *Judas Gaulonites*, who had insinuated to them that they were the Lord's People, and, therefore, under no Obligation to pay Tribute to *Cæsar*, or acknowledge any other King but him ; whereupon, when they came to *Jerusalem* at the Passover, *Pilate*, the Roman Governor, being in-

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formed

formed of the seditious Principles they had been propagating amongst the *Jews* there, and elsewhere, surpris'd, and fell upon them, as they were sacrificing in the Temple, and slew them: To which our Saviour subjoin'd another remarkable Instance, *of eighteen Persons, on whom the Tower in Siloam fell*, and destroyed them; and I could give you many more of the like kind, but the Time allotted me will not suffer me at present. However, one I must not omit, because it is the principal Occasion of our assembling together this Day,—and that is the dreadful Earthquake which happened at *Lisbon*, and several other Places, on the First of *November* last; whereof a particular and authentic Account has been transmitted to us, the most universal and destructive that ever was heard of; for it not only extended itself with the utmost Rage and Violence through all their maritime Coast, but was likewise felt, more or less, almost all over *Europe*, and at Sea as well as by Land; and, if Credit may be given to more than common Report, in this Neighbourhood, at *Cobham*, but a few Miles from this Place, the Water in a Pond was agitated, all on a sudden, about the same time, in so surpris'ing a Manner, as evidently discovered it, by the singularity of its Motion, to be the Effect of the same extraordinary Shock, whereby that famous City, the Capital

pital of the Kingdom of *Portugal*, the Royal Seat of their Kings, and a Patriarchal See, one of the fairest and richest Cities of *Europe*, is, in a manner, totally destroyed, with a prodigious many of its Inhabitants, as well as most of its stately Edifices, the chief of their immense Treasure, magnificent Furniture, and mercantile Effects; and what was not buried in the Ruins, was generally afterwards consumed by the Flames, which soon spread themselves all over it, and burnt several Days with so much fury, that, as one writes from thence, *Lisbon* is no more! and this is not the first Time it hath suffered by the same Calamity; for, in the Year 1551, an Earthquake likewise threw down two Hundred of its Houses, besides Churches and Monasteries, and shattered six Hundred more, and one Thousand of its Inhabitants perished, the rest escaping to the Fields; but the Desolation then was not so great, it has wonderfully increased in its Wealth and Buildings since, as well as Number of its Inhabitants, and was grown so superb and grand, and had been a considerable time, that it was a Proverb in their Language; in *English* thus: ‘He who hath not seen *Lisbon* hath seen nothing that is good;’ and was still increasing in Pomp and Magnificence, and growing more and more populous every Day. And now, alas! nothing is to be seen of

her, but a Heap of Rubbish and Confusion. It has fared with her, as it often doth with us poor Mortals, after much Care, Labour and Expences to build us up, and render us fit for the Service of Mankind, Death frequently comes suddenly and unexpectedly upon us, in the Prime and Vigour of our Days, dissolves those earthly Houses of this Tabernacle, and crumbles them into Dust; so this great and flourishing City, which, to speak in Scripture Phrase, *was lifted up to Heaven*, like that whose Downfal our Saviour prophesied of in the Gospel, *Capernaum* I mean, is *thrust down into Hell*, and from that very great Height of Grandeur, to which she was exalted, she is fallen as it is said of *Babylon the Great*, she is fallen into the Depth of Destruction, and probably will never rise more; all which are extraordinary Cases, especially this last. And what shall we say of it? Astonishing Event! how uncertain is the Destiny of the greatest Cities and Kingdoms, as well as of the proudest Mortals! most fatal Catastrophe! if we consider the infinite Damages sustained by it, and what Multitudes were in a Minute, or two, hurried out of the World, without any Warning, by so violent a Death; well might the affrighted and trembling Inhabitants, who all of a sudden felt the strange convulsive Motion of the Earth under them, looked up and saw the
lofty

lofty Buildings reeling like a drunken Man, tottering and tumbling down about them ; heard the awful Cracks of the Beams dislocated and rent asunder by the Violence of the Concussion, and the prodigious Sound of the ponderous Weights falling on the Ground, the Groans of the Dying, and perceived the Numbers of the Dead, expecting the next Moment to be swallowed up themselves, every Thing in the utmost Confusion, stand amazed at the wonderful Sight, and imagine, as many of them did, that the whole Frame of Nature was dissolving, and the World at an End ; especially when they beheld immediately upon this, the Sky over them covered with a horrid Darkness springing out of the Ruins, the City all on fire, and the Flames ascending up to Heaven, as if it was the last, and general Conflagration. Inconceivable Desolation ! and how melancholy the Fate of them, who survived to tell the dismal Tale ! it is impossible to paint the dreadful Scene. But is this all it portends ? Or is the whole Design of it only to terrify and amaze, and set the World a wondering ? *Isaiab* says, *When the Judgments of God are in the Earth, the Inhabitants of the World will learn Righteousness.* And cannot we find out some more instructive and important Meaning in it ?

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As often as any thing of this kind happens, it occasions much Speculation ; and various are Mens Conjectures about it. Some attribute it to Chance ; others to Fate ; and others, again, to the Influence of the Heavenly Bodies, or the Sufferers being born under an unlucky Planet ; many, to the Power and Malice of the Devil, which was the Cause of all *Job's* Misfortunes ; whilst not a few, who believe God to be the righteous Governor of the World, allowing nothing to natural Causes, look on it to be an immediate Punishment from Heaven, inflicted on them for their Sins ; and Multitudes, considering that the Generality of Men are Sinners very much alike, and that these Calamities are oftentimes only single, and never universal, conceit they are greater Sinners than others, because they suffer such Things. And this seems to be the most common Opinion ; what Mankind, ignorant of the Reasons of God's Actings, being led away by their Uncharitableness on one Hand, and Self-love on the other, have been always prone to think, whenever any Man, and especially whole Bodies and Societies of Men, as Kingdoms, Cities, or Towns, have been suddenly destroyed, or suffered greatly, either by the Sword, Pestilence, or Famine ; by Fire, as did a great Part of your Dwellings not many Years ago, within
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the Memory of many now living, who were Eye-witnesses of it; by Inundations, Earth-quakes, or any other remarkable Calamity; they have been very ready to suppose, this was not only a Judgment upon them for their Sins, which I shall not dispute in all Cases of this Nature, for I could give you several such in Sacred Writ; but that they were greater Sinners than others. So, 'tis highly probable, reasoned they who told our Saviour of the *Galileans*, by his Answer to them; and the Disciples, concerning him that was born blind, *who asked him, whether it was he, or his Parents, had sinned*, that he was thus born different from the rest of Mankind; imagining, according to the *Platonick* and *Pythagorean* Principles, which the *Essenes*, a famous Sect of the *Jews*, espoused at that Time, that this was a Punishment upon him, either for the Sins he had committed himself in some other Body, or before he came into the World, or for the Sins of his Parents.

And in like manner did the Barbarians about *St. Paul*; who, when they saw a Viper, which had been sleeping in the Wood wherewith they kindled a Fire for him, come out of it, being roused by the Heat, and fasten on his Hand, said amongst themselves, *No doubt this Man was a Murderer, whom though he escaped the Sea, yet Vengeance suffereth not to live*: And they

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expected every Moment when he would have fallen down dead. But when, after waiting some Time for the Event, they perceived he received no Harm, they changed their Opinion, and on the contrary, upon the same Principle, concluded he was a God (as they at *Lystra* did, on another Occasion,) some divine Person, either *Hercules*, whom they worshipped in that Island, or some other God, come down, in human Shape, to visit them. And, Ages before this, *Eliphaz* said of *Job*, under his severe Affliction, *Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished being innocent? Or where were the Righteous cut off? Even I have seen, they that plant Iniquity, and sow Wickedness, reap the same. By the Blast of God they perish, and by the Breath of his Nostrils they are consumed.* And this proves it to be a very ancient and prevailing Opinion, most of which are Instances of single Persons only; but when large Bodies are destroyed together, as has happened lately at *Lisbon*, this is more publick and striking, and liable to much greater Suspicions. And, I doubt not, the same Argument has served here, under the heavy Calamities which have befallen the *Portuguese*, to fill the Minds of many with the same Reflections upon them; raised in them a Jealousy at least, if they have not put it down for a Demonstration, that those unhappy People

ple were not only great Sinners, but greater Sinners than others, because they suffered such Things.

And this may be your Judgment likewise; but if it be, excuse my Freedom in telling you, it is not only arbitrary and precarious, but wrong: And this our Saviour has proved, by two of the Instances before us; saying, to them who had entertained this Opinion of them, *I tell you nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* Which is a peremptory Denial of all such ill-grounded Suspicions, as well as a severe Reflection upon all who harbour them on any such Occasions; and a full Answer to most of the Calamities that are incident to Mankind; at least to all those which are evidently the Effects of natural Causes; or the Folly and Wickedness of others, which are of a large Extent, and comprehend the greatest Part of them, and where God himself does not visibly interpose, by any external Signs and Tokens, to warrant a different Sentence upon them. Not that I would exclude the great Governor of the Universe from any Part of it, or insinuate that he has not adapted Causes to their Effects, and does not by his Providence superintend them, and dispose of all human Events; when *not a Sparrow falls to the Ground without our Father; and the very Hairs of our Head are every one num-*

bered by him: That Mankind are not all of them Sinners, and some very great, and that they do not deserve the Evils they suffer; that no Man, or Societies of Men, were ever punished for their Iniquities; and that these unhappy Persons were not punished for theirs; our Saviour intimates no such Thing: But all I contend for is, that God's dealing so with any, at any Time, is no Argument that they are greater Sinners than others: And I have His charitable and unerring Judgment on my Side, which is of more Authority than all other Conjectures whatsoever.

In punishing a sinful Nation, or People, God seems often to proceed in the Way of Decimation, practised by the ancient *Romans*; who, when a considerable Number had been guilty of Desertion, or any other capital Offence, did not put all of them to Death; but, to shew their Clemency and Moderation on one Hand, and strike a Terror on the other, they obliged them to draw Lots; and only One out of Ten, and afterwards, when the Custom altered, One out of Twenty, and One out of a Hundred, suffered.

So we frequently see Omnipotence exerting itself in the Government of the World. God, as an excellent * Divine of our Church expresses

* Dr. Blackhall, Bishop of Exeter.

it, commonly lets the Arrows of his Vengeance fly, as it were, at Random, without distinguishing Persons or Things; just as if he was not at all concerned who were stricken, and who escaped, only by way of Example. And it is very evident to our Senses, he doth not always act in this World according to the strictest Rules of Proportion, by Weight and Measure, render to every Man according to his Deeds, as he will do to the greatest Nicety and Exactness in the next; but the Righteous promiscuously suffer with the Wicked; and *these* many Times prosper, when *they* are greatly afflicted; and without indebted him for a Recompence hereafter; though he will undoubtedly, in Honour of his Government, make a Difference betwixt them.

'Tis a sufficient Vindication of his Justice, that he is the Great Sovereign of the Universe; and we generally deserve to be punished more than we are; and where the Case is more intricate, as it sometimes is, he has always Reasons for what he doth, and will justify his Conduct, though they may not appear plainly unto us.

The Judge of all the Earth cannot but do right; and who shall call him to an Account, or durst say unto him, What dost thou? or Why dost thou so? *There is one Event to the Righteous and to the Wicked*, Solomon says; and it is impossible, by any Thing that is before us, I mean in a

National Sense, to know who are the greatest Sinners, and who not. All Things happen alike to all, unless it be when God is pleased himself to mark them out to us: And therefore, instead of censuring and condemning others for their Misfortunes; the best and wisest Way is, to follow our Saviour's Advice, and make that Use of it he most graciously intended. This will be for our Advantage, the other only exposes our Folly, and aggravates our Guilt; and without great Caution, we shall, on account of our Uncharitableness, involve ourselves by it, in much worse Sufferings than they. And the Counsel he gives is, *Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* And this is the most instructive Inference from them, and the proper Business of the Day.

His Most Gracious Majesty, who is ever watchful and tender of the Welfare and Prosperity of all his Subjects, having a deep Sense of the great Calamities which have lately befallen some neighbouring Countries, in Alliance and Friendship with us; and likewise considering the present Situation of our public Affairs, which requires our most serious Attention; being, in the Issue of them, of the greatest Importance to the Happiness and Security of these Kingdoms; and how manifold and provoking our Sins are; and what dreadful Miseries we
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should suffer, if God should visit us in the same, or like Manner for them, as we deserve, and have too much Reason to fear, if we do not timely forsake them; has thought fit, at this Time of most imminent Danger, to order it to be set apart for a publick, and general Fast; that we might all of us, as one Person, humble ourselves before Almighty God for them; and, by our most earnest Prayers and Supplications, deprecate his Wrath, implore his Protection, beg a Blessing on our Fleets, and Armies, and intercede for the Continuance of his Mercies amongst us. And I hope we, who are here present, are all met together duly prepared for it. And that we may perform it aright, and obtain the Ends intended by it, I shall shew what it is to repent; and what we must expect the Consequence will be if we do, or do not. If we do, we may promise ourselves a favourable Event; but if we do not, *ye shall all likewise perish*, either in the same Manner, or by some other very sore Calamity: or, should we chance to escape the Vengeance of Heaven in this World, by a much greater Destruction in the next, we shall everlastingly perish, which is, by far, the greatest Punishment we can suffer.

And here I shall not entertain you with a long Harangue upon it, but briefly observe, to
repent,

repent, is not to cease from our worldly Employments, nor to use more Abstinence than of other Days, to set apart a Portion of our Time for religious Exercises, to come to Church in Obedience to the Royal Proclamation which he has enjoined us, and join there in all the Prayers and Offices composed and ordained on the Occasion: To come with a sad Countenance, and appear unto Men to fast; to be sorry for, and confess our Sins, and never forsake them; to exchange one Sin for another, and to relinquish some of our Vices, and retain others; or, in general, to make a great Profession of Religion, and live in the habitual Practice but of one known Sin, though we are possessed of every other Virtue: Is it such a Fast that I have chosen? says God by the Prophet, *Isa. lviii. 5. To bow the Head like a Bulrush, and spread Sackcloth and Ashes under us.* No; it is not to do after the Manner of the Jews when they fasted; but it is to be *renewed in the Spirit of our Minds, and become new Creatures*; to think differently of Religion which we have so shamefully neglected, and of the Follies and Vices we have been so excessively fond of; of the Nature, Tendency, and Importance of them, from what we did before; to hate Vice, and love Virtue; *to cease to do Evil, and learn to do well*; to abandon every sinful Course, and live *soberly, righteously,*
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and godly; and endeavour to walk in all the Commandments of the Lord blameless. It is a total Change, both of Heart and Life: *This is the Fast that I have chosen*, says God by the same Prophet, *to loose the Bands of Wickedness, to undo the heavy Burdens, and let the Oppressed go free, and to break every Yoke*; which is more peculiarly the Province of Magistrates, who are chosen of God for this Purpose, *to be a Terror to evil Doers, and a Praise to them that do well*: And should not only set good Examples in their own private Conduct, but endeavour to redress every Grievance which belongs to the Office within their Jurisdiction, discountenance and punish Vice, and encourage and reward Virtue, to the utmost of their Power. And, in general, where we are every one of us concerned, according to our Abilities, *to give Bread to those that want, and bring the Poor that are cast out to our Houses, to feed the Hungry, cloath the naked*, be humane and charitable; cloathed with every Virtue, and do all the Good Offices we can: This is Repentance, and *to afflict the Soul* for our own Sins, and the Sins of the Nation; and the only Method we can take, to make this Day *an acceptable Day unto the Lord*, to obtain his Favour, to prevail with him to avert his Judgments from, and continue his Mercies and Blessings
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amongst us. And here, by way of Encouragement to it, give me Leave briefly to mention the happy Situation we of this Nation are in. *The Lines are fallen to us in pleasant Places, yea we have a goodly Heritage:* We live in a *Land flowing with Milk and Honey*; that abounds with the greatest Plenty and Variety of Blessings of any Nation under Heaven, and are surrounded with the Riches of the Sea, which affords us likewise an infinite Store of divers Kinds of them, and so happily disposed of by Nature, that we can command the choicest Delicacies of most other nations, and Countries of the habitable World, whenever we please; and though they cost somewhat more Trouble and Expence to transplant and import them, we enjoy them in as great Plenty and Perfection, at least as much as we want, as the Inhabitants and Natives of these Countries themselves.

We live under the best of Governments, have the best of Kings, and the best of Laws, and it is no ones Fault but theirs who are entrusted with the Execution of them, that we do not universally reap the Benefit of them; which is a Misfortune that not only attends us, but all other human Governments whatsoever, and will ever remain a Misfortune whilst Mankind are imperfect in this State of Corruption; And yet I do not know any Country excels us herein,

in, that has generally better Magistrates, or is better governed ; but whatever may be wanting here, is no Flaw in the Constitution itself, which is as well formed to make us all happy, betwixt despotic Monarchy on one Hand, and Democracy on the other ; betwixt these two Extremes, neither of which can complete the Happiness of any Nation, however they may contribute to the mock Grandeur of the Prince, and Madness of the People ; for where the one is, there is commonly Tyranny and Slavery, and the other, Discord and Confusion : I say it is as well formed, and as perfect, as the Wisdom of Man can make it.—Every one *dwells safely under his own Vine, and under his own Fig Tree* ; and, as long as the Laws by which we are governed, so strongly fenced in and secured, continue to operate in their Places, it is impossible for any one to *make us afraid, Ephraim cannot vex Juda, nor Juda vex Ephraim* ; but we must all enjoy both our civil and religious Liberties, in as full Extent as the Order, the Peace, and Safety of Society will admit of, or we can reasonably wish for ; and greater Liberty would be Licentiousness, no Blessing but a Curse : And what is yet more valuable than all I have said, or can say under this Head, we have the Bible, from whence we fetch our Religion, and on which our greatest Happiness, our eternal Happiness depends, in our
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Hands ; not locked up in a Language the generality do not understand, as it was by ignorant and designing Men in some former Ages, and is at this very Day in most Popish Countries ; but that every one may reap the Benefit of it in our own native Tongue, and in as great Perspicuity and Perfection, in respect of all the fundamentals contained in it, as when it was first published to the World : In short we want nothing to make us a flourishing and a happy nation, and we are actually so in every Thing but ourselves ; and it cannot be denied, what I am sorry to mention, that under all the Advantages and Blessings we enjoy, we are, notwithstanding, a discontented, fractious, ungrateful, divided People, and that much of our Happiness is eclipsed and destroyed by it. It is this gives our common Enemy, whose *Machiavilian* Policy is to divide and destroy (for a Kingdom, any more than a House, divided against itself, cannot long stand) continually such Advantage over us, whom we might otherwise defy, with all his boasted Legions, his whole combined Force could not possibly hurt us ; and I hope our Eyes, which have been so long blinded, begin at last to be open ; it is high time when he hath openly begun already Hostilities against us, for which he hath been a long while secretly preparing, and in time of profound Peace and Tranquility,

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ever since the Cessation of the last War, and is at the Gate forming his Batteries, ready for a general Assault ; and we are threatened with the Ruin of every Thing that is dear and valuable to us, and by the Sullenness of his Councils, we may be sure he will, without some unforeseen, unexpected, Turn of Affairs, employ his utmost Efforts to deprive us of it, and accomplish his treacherous Designs ; which should, as it has, put every honest *Englishman* on his guard. And the only way to secure these inestimable Blessings to ourselves, and perpetuate them to Posterity, is to lay aside our party Quarrels and Animosities, and every one to unite and repent. And may we all of us begin to do it this Day. This, in case the Wrath of God be kindled against us, if any thing, will appease it. It has been often proved in times of the greatest Calamity and Danger, and many have found the Benefit of it ; so did, for Instance, *Nineveh*, that great and populous City, so much renowned in History and on this very Account, when she was devoted to Destruction, and would have been certainly demolished in forty Days time, if she had not repented, *Yet forty Days*, says the Prophet *Jonah*, who was sent to warn her of it, and *Nineveh shall be overthrown ; she believed and proclaimed a Fast, and the King and his Nobles, and all the People humbled themselves for their Sins, and God, who saw their Works, that*

they turned from their evil Way, repented of the Evil that he said he would do unto them, and he did it not. And this has been always his constant Method of dealing with sinful Nations ; he declared it himself by his Prophet *Jeremiah* to the *Jews*, saying, *At what Instant I shall speak concerning a Nation, and concerning a Kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that Nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil Ways, I will repent of the Evil that I thought to do unto them.* And we do not find, in all the History of that People, one Instance wherein he, at any Time, varied from it. And, for the same Reason, if we *turn from our evil Way, and the Violence that is in our Hands* ; though our Destruction be threatened, and seems to be very near ; he will turn away his Wrath from, have Mercy on, and save us. But if, on the contrary, we repent not, we *shall all likewise perish.* This our Saviour meant primarily of the *Jews* ; and it was not long before it was literally executed upon them, in a most terrible Manner ; especially all the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, when such an infinite Number of them were put to the Sword, and slain by the Fall of the Towers and Porches of the Temple upon them ; and their Blood was spilt round the very Altar. But it is equally true of us, and all other States and King-

Kingdoms, for the same Reason. For these Things happened unto them for Ensamples; and were written for our Admonition, *upon whom the Ends of the World are come*. We *shall all likewise perish*, either in this World, or the next, except we *repent*.

And why may we not expect it in this, and by the very same Instruments, the *Galileans*, and those Eighteen in *Jerusalem*, suffered? Which was by the Sword, and the Fall of a heavy Pile of Buildings on their Heads. You have heard what a dreadful Destruction of the last Kind, the greatest we read of in History, ever since the Creation, has lately happened to our distressed Friends and Allies the *Portuguese*, by an Earthquake; which threw down their Churches, Monasteries, and a Multitude of other stately Buildings, upon them, and crushed them to Death. And we are every Moment liable to the same Misfortune; unless you will say, we are better guarded by Nature, or more the Favourites of Providence, than they were. But who, hitherto, has been Philosopher enough to penetrate to the Center of the Earth, and inspect the Bowels of it? Or even to discover the Quantity of Combustibles which is contained in any Part of it, either in this Island, or elsewhere? Earthquakes are no new Things in *England*, though they have not
been

been so frequent or destructive here, as in some other Countries; and Islands, generally, and all Places near the Sea, are most subject to them: On which Account, it is conjectured, *Neptune*, the pretended God of it, was by the Ancients stiled, *Shaker of the Earth*. And it is not many Years ago, we were, at a small Distance from one another, surpris'd by Two Shocks of them, which made many of our Hearts tremble: And who knows how soon we may have another; and how fatal it may be? *Lisbon* was no more apprehensive of theirs, the Moment before it happened, than we are: And yet, what a sudden and universal Destruction fell upon them! And for what Causes do we judge that we are more the Favourites of Heaven, than they? Or that the very next Shock will not swallow us up, and render our Condition as calamitous as theirs? We have, it is true, and blessed be God for it, the Protestant Religion still, and been often preserved from Ruin, when we have been in the greatest Danger of it: But though we have no such Popery, or Inquisition, amongst us, as there is at *Lisbon*; and God has been often our Friend, are we more charitable towards one another, more reformed, or our Impieties grown less, for the Favours we have received? We might then, perhaps, entertain some favourable Hopes. It is evident we are

not;

not; and that Atheism, Infidelity, Profaneness, and the Spirit of Persecution (which are the Things that deservedly draw down the Judgments of Heaven on a sinful Nation, where they abound), prevail amongst all Parties, as much as ever, if they have not increased; which is a high Aggravation of our Guilt. And will not God visit us for these? Most assuredly he will, if we go on in our Wickedness: We have no Reason to expect better Treatment. According to the wisest Observations, there is a certain fixed Time for the Overthrow of sinful Cities, and Kingdoms, when their Iniquities are full, and there are no Hopes left of their Reformation, beyond which, God's Patience will not wait. One Hundred and Twenty Years was the Space allotted for the old World to repent in: *Sodom* and *Gomorrab* would have been saved, had there been but Ten righteous Persons found amongst them; *Jerusalem* had its Day, before the Things which belonged to their Peace were for ever hid from their Eyes; and had not the City of *Nineveh* turned from the Evil of their Ways, Forty Days more would have entirely completed their Destruction: Or, if we do not perish by an Earthquake, we may be destroyed by the Sword. It is but a few Years ago, was broke, the Neck of a Rebellion, which had ravaged a great Part
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of *Scotland*, and afterwards several northern Parts of *England*, plundered the publick Treasure, the Rebels acting the Part of free Booters where-ever they strolled, seized one of the Castles, and penetrated a great Way into the Kingdom, without Controul; defeated Part of our Forces, and intimidated others; before our *British* Hero, his *Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland*, fired with Indignation at the Robberies they had committed, and his Country's Wrongs, struck home, and made these blustering *Hectors*, with their Targets, and broad Swords, pay dear for their rebellious and insolent Attempt; the like whereunto happened in the Reign of King *George I.* and we are, at this Time, engaged in a bloody and destructive War in *America*, by which Numbers have miserably perished; and are threatened with another in *Europe*, more bloody and destructive than that; as bloody a War as ever was kindled, be the Event never so favourable; and, I hope, shall have the like good Success. But how shall we be certain of this? As well prepared as we may be for it, and as hearty and unanimous in carrying it on (and never was the Nation more united in supporting any Design); *the Race is not always to the Swift, nor the Battle to the Strong*: Nor have we, at this Time, any superior Force to boast of, by Land; though we may flatter ourselves with
 Victory

Victory at Sea: And this, as sanguine as we may be, we can be no more secure of than the other. And should it be our unhappy Fate to fall before our Enemies; what dreadful Havock and Destruction must ensue! Farewel to every Thing that is valuable to us as *Englishmen*, and Protestants: We shall have nothing left worth contending for. The Moment we are conquered, we are ruined; deprived of a Form of Government the best constituted, to make its Subjects happy, of any Form of Government in the World; of our Trade, the greatest Support of the Kingdom; which furnishes us with Money, the Sinews of War; enables us to maintain Forces by Land, and send Fleets to Sea; without which, we should be wholly defenceless, and become an easy Prey to any potent State that might be disposed to invade us; and of the covetous, ambitious Attempts of foreign Potentates, and who have succeeded in their Attempts: We have had many Instances in this Island, before it was united under one Head, and the Government settled on the happy Foundation on which it now stands; and not only deprived of these invaluable Privileges, which are peculiar to us, our Glory, wherein we out-shine, and are the Envy of all other Governments and Nations, but of the Protestant Succession, and Protestant Religion, which is

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indebted to it for its Preservation, and Continuance with us ; our civil and religious Liberties ; our Properties, and Lives ; and made a Province to *France*, or the Vassals of some arbitrary Prince, who, however artfully he may disguise himself, before he has got us absolutely in his Power, will soon throw off the Masque, and, notwithstanding all his specious Declarations, rule us with a Rod of Iron, and instead of Whips, chastise us with Scorpions ; and we should find, by woful Experience, as much as we complain of the heavy *Yoke put upon us*, his *Little Finger much thicker than the Loins of the Prince* we live under. Nor would many of the Complainants, as full of Expectations as they may be, from a Change of Government, fare much better themselves ; we should become Beggars and Slaves, as those Countries generally are, where Popery and arbitrary Power prevail ; have a Religion as void of Humanity, as it is full of Superstition, though called by the Name of Christianity, and the Professors of it the Holy Catholic Church, imposed on us from *Rome*, and be as much enslaved in our Consciences, as in our Estates, our Liberties, and Lives : In short, we should undergo a thorough Revolution both in Church and State, and all would be Ruin and Destruction round about us. This will be our miserable Situation, should God suffer

fer the Enemy to prosper. Or, should we be delivered from the Sword; a Pestilence, or Famine, would as effectually do the Business, as any other dire Calamity. And we have had a terrible Distemper for many Years past amongst the Cattle, very much a-kin to them, and how easy is it, by changing the Subject, for God, in the Course of his Providence, to convert the Mur-der, or whatever it be that has destroyed such Multitudes of them, into a Plague, as destructive to Men; or by suffering it more universally to reign, endanger, and bring on a Famine upon us. Nothing more facil than for him to do this or, if he is pleased to spare our Lives, and not to permit either these, or any other great Evil to befall us in this World, which is more than we deserve, we shall eternally perish in the next; wherefore let us rent our Hearts, and not our Garments, and turn unto the Lord our God, who is gracious and merciful, slow to Anger, and of great Kindness, and repenteth him of the Evil; what we have in hand, and what we have Reason to expect, are the strongest Inducements to it. And I hope you have been very sincere in the Prayers and Supplications you have this Day offered up to Almighty God; and that he who has so often heard us in our Distress, and so wonderfully preserved us, will be intreated by us. But then let me observe to you (and

what I am about to say, is founded on most certain Experience), if we would obtain the Blessings we have now prayed to God for, we must not imagine, though we have been ever so devout, that all is done which is required of us, we must not only repent here (and relapse into the same Vices we have repented of, when we go hence), but continue to live according to this good Beginning, pray and repent in our Closets at home, and in our Families, as well as at Church, and bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance all our Days; so, and not else, may we expect God will have Mercy on us, defend and deliver us from all our Enemies, and from whatever other national Calamities may threaten us. The not doing this was the fatal Error of God's peculiar People the *Jews*, and at last proved their entire Destruction; and, should we Christians and Protestants, fall into the same Mistake, we should, notwithstanding we are so highly favoured by him, *all likewise perish*; and the generality of us are so fondly wicked, have so little Sense of Religion, of our Duty either to God or our Neighbour, are so grievously corrupted in our Principles and Manners, that if we do not speedily resolve upon it, it is much to be feared the Time is near at hand. I pray God, therefore, we may reform all of us, from the highest to the lowest, and follow the Things which belong to
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our Peace, before it is too late, and they are
 for ever hid from our Eyes ; of thine infinite
 Mercy grant it, and that “ the Words which
 “ we have this Day heard with our outward
 “ Ears, may be so grafted inwardly in our
 “ Hearts, that we may bring forth the Fruits of
 “ good living, to the Honour and Praise of
 “ thy Holy Name, through Jesus Christ our
 “ Lord, to whom be Glory for ever, *Amen.*”

F I N I S.

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